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30 July 1970

*See OCT
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : Comments on Drex Godfrey's Memorandum
of 1 June 1970, entitled, "NIS Delinquencies"

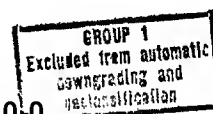
1. The overall distaste in OCI, at least as Drex saw it, for NIS production responsibilities shows through, starkly, in his think piece. Although it includes a number of helpful observations, the paper doesn't seem to advance the discussion very much.

2. Actually, OCI turns out more good work on the NIS than one would assume from reading the memorandum. I am told by my colleagues here that the quality of research and writing, and the record in meeting deadlines, varies greatly from one OCI division to another. Most contributions from the Eastern and Western Europe shops are excellent, although they may slip a deadline now and then; many sections produced in the Far East Division are very good; the quality of the drafts from the Middle East-Africa Division have not been very good in the past, but recent Middle East contributions are better; Western Hemisphere Division's product and performance are generally poor. The point is that good NIS drafts are produced in OCI. One can only admire their authors the more, if the environment is as uncongenial to NIS work as Drex's memorandum suggests.

3. The memorandum makes much of the "aridness" and the "sheer boredom" of the NIS task. That may reflect more on the analyst than on the assignment. Researching, organizing, and writing an NIS General Survey, many of which are near book length, is difficult and demanding work. Indeed, it is harder work and calls for longer concentration and greater discipline than the OCI desk officer is likely to encounter in his regular functions. Also, it doesn't quite do to characterize NIS drafting as "cut and paste according to set outlines". There is a great deal more to the task than that. The Standard Instructions are formidable, but they are "guides" to a format; OCI, OER, and ONE also have their formats and rarely stray far from them. The Standard Instructions are now under review and OCI assistance in improving them is invited.

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4. I tend to share the conclusion that NIS assignments be given to newcomers for training purposes only rarely, if at all. Few junior officers are up to the job; they get frustrated; OCI and OBGI supervisors get testy; the NIS production schedule falls apart; and nobody gains. I also agree that the NIS Committee ought to be more innovative, dynamic, and substantive. Perhaps something can be done about that, little by little. I also feel that it ought to be a higher-level committee than it now is, given its responsibilities. I hope that I will be able to do something about that too, but I am not overly optimistic in view of the limited success ONE has had over the years in seeking to upgrade the level and substantive quality of representatives that come to coordinate draft NIE's.

5. Most of the suggestions in Drex's memorandum seem to me unworkable, or already checked out. The proposal (paragraphs 6-8) that college interns, without knowledge of intelligence procedures or sources, be given 6-month contracts to do General Survey sections seems impractical and more than just a little bit demeaning of OCI capabilities. Are the students expected to do a better job in less time than OCI officers have done in the past? The elimination of certain NIS coverage (as suggested in paragraph 11. b.) in favor of a bibliography of "good, open material" would not work any more -- and for much the same reasons -- that current reporting and analysis on certain countries or problems cannot be dropped in favor of good open material. The open literature is unevaluated, unchecked, uneven, and diffuse. The NIS product is not intended for the man in leisurely pursuit of knowledge. He is looking for concise, readily available, tailored information.

6. There may be something in the suggestion (paragraph 9) that the "NIS burden" be undertaken by mature editors picked from the "score, possibly hundreds" of them tucked away in various Agency nooks and crannies who might want an NIS writing tour on rotation. I do not know if such people exist or how OCI would organize to combine the non-substantive editors and the OCI substantivists into an efficient production team.

7. The suggestion that essential NIS elements be identified and that remaining NIS elements be recorded and maintained by ADP techniques has been explored in detail. An outside consulting firm was employed, and the finding was that ADP techniques have only limited applicability to the NIS mission and program. This was included in the User Survey.

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8. I am not ready yet to reach major conclusions about the NIS Program and about what ought to be done about, with, or to it. I have discovered, however, that there is rather intense friction and tension between OCI and OBGI -- not across the board, but scattered through various levels -- and as a first step, I am determined to reduce the antagonism, and any causes for it that I can identify and eliminate.

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Director
Basic and Geographic Intelligence